

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 have been previously canceled. Claims 15, 25 and 34 have been amended and no new claims added or canceled by way of this response. Thus, claims 15-34 are currently pending and presented for examination. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Response to Rejections Under Section 102:

Claims 15-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b), the Examiner contending that these claims are anticipated by Albrecht (USPN 3,950,113).

Applicants have amended claims 15, 25 and 34 to clarify Applicants invention to be a sealing structure between axially adjacent rows of blades, as disclosed in figure 2 and paragraphs 00013, 00030 and 00047.

Applicants' amended claim 15 recites:

... the first sheet metal component **forms a seal** when installed between the first abutment and a second abutment arranged **on an axially adjacent turbine blade**.

Applicants' amended claim 25 recites:

... the first resilient elastic component **forms a seal** when installed between the first abutment and a second abutment arranged **with an axially adjacent turbine blade**.

Applicants' amended claim 34 recites:

... a first bendable metal component secured to a first abutment arranged on the blade leaf such that the sheet metal component **forms a seal** when installed between the first abutment and a second abutment arranged **on an axially adjacent turbine blade**.

The amendments clarify that the present invention provides an apparatus for sealing between blades of axially adjacent blades; for example, sealing between a blade in a first row and a blade in a second row. In contrast, the invention of Albrecht is directed to an apparatus that provides sealing between blades within the same row of blades. Albrecht does not specifically illustrate the use of cover plate 24 to seal between adjacent blades of the same row, but he describes such an embodiment at column 2, line 66 through column 3, line 3, where he

states that the "cover plate 24 may also protrude on one side of the blade base 12 beyond the web plate 15 and form thereby a step which engages underneath the web plate of the adjoining turbine blade so that a good overlap results for the cover plates of the turbine rotor. Cover plates are well known in the art as structures that are attached between the blades within a row of blades, as described and illustrated more clearly for example in United States patent 7,104,758 (copy attached) numeral 3. The above-quoted section of Albrecht is thus teaching that the web plate cover plate 24 may be extended to protrude on one side of the blade base 12 within the same row of blades. There is no teaching or suggestion in Albrecht of forming any type of seal between blades of axially adjacent rows of blades.

MPEP 2131 requires that "TO ANTICIPATE A CLAIM, THE REFERENCE MUST TEACH EVERY ELEMENT OF THE CLAIM." Albrecht can not anticipate the present invention because he does not teach an apparatus that provides sealing between axially adjacent blades, and he does not even address such an axially-adjacent sealing function.

In view of the above, claims 15, 25 and 34 are not anticipated by Albrecht. Furthermore, claims 16-24 and 26-33 are also patentable at least based on their dependence from claims 15 and 25 as well as based on their own merits. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the Section 102 rejections.

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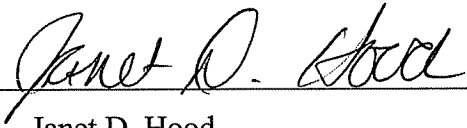
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Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the rejections and timely pass the application to allowance. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address. Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this paper. The commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

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